Kiteworks

NYC Health + Hospitals' Clinicians and Staff Share PHI Securely and Efficiently

NYC Health + Hospitals is the largest public health care system in the nation—a network of 11 hospitals, trauma centers, neighborhood health centers, nursing homes, and post-acute care centers. The integrated health care system provides essential services to more than one million New Yorkers every year in more than 70 locations across the city's five boroughs.

Struggling With Delays in Document Sharing

To provide the best care possible for its patients, the doctors and staff at NYC Health + Hospitals often need to share information with external parties like specialists, community-based physicians, other health providers, insurance companies, and government agencies at the state and local levels. The exchange of information—and the systems and workflows behind this exchange—must meet specific objectives—specifically, improving patient safety, quality, and efficiency. Doing so effectively reduces medical errors, improves productivity, and supports good clinical care.

Challenges arose for NYC Health + Hospitals when protected health information (PHI) was involved. For example, as a safety net hospital serving a large low-income and uninsured population, NYC Health + Hospitals frequently shares patient data with Medicaid.

The good news was that confidential patient data was properly protected. The organization's data loss prevention (DLP) solution did exactly what it was supposed to do—detect and stop sensitive communications from going out. The bad news was that necessary communications—the exchange of information that improves patient safety, quality, and efficiency—was disrupted and delayed. "Our doctors and employees collaborate daily with outside parties, and we needed a more effective but still secure way to make that happen," says Soma Bhaduri, Director of Information Security and Risk Management for NYC Health + Hospitals. "Combining security and ease of use with our everyday content sharing was a critical next step."

Evaluating Secure Content Sharing Solutions

NYC Health + Hospitals evaluated secure file sharing solutions with several requirements in mind. Ease of use was at the top of the list, so that employees could continue to work without taking extra steps to get important documents out the door. NYC Health + Hospitals selected

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Kiteworks because it was easy to use while also providing the highest level of security and control. Bhaduri's team knew that this would ensure the confidentiality and integrity of content containing PHI.

Another huge selling point was the Kiteworks Microsoft Outlook plugin, which integrated Kiteworks with Microsoft Outlook. With the Outlook plugin, employees simply compose a new email and click the Kiteworks button to attach a file. Then, both the attachment and the email are securely uploaded to the Kiteworks server and delivered. To preserve the integrity of the content, the file stays in Kiteworks and only a link to the file is delivered. And because Kiteworks integrates with any DLP server that supports the ICAP protocol, files are consistently and efficiently screened with the same criteria, further safeguarding PHI.

Deploying and Expanding the Footprint

NYC Health + Hospitals first deployed Kiteworks as a pilot program with 6,000 users. Both administrative staff and clinicians utilize shared workspaces within Kiteworks to enable real-time collaboration—internally and externally—with individuals on either side of the firewall, on any device, without requiring a VPN.

The pilot was such a success that NYC Health + Hospitals rolled out Kiteworks to a number of locations across its expansive system. Adoption was swift. "The rapid increase in adoption is a direct result of the Kiteworks Outlook plugin," Bhaduri explains. "Because it looks and feels like email, adoption is higher—and the convenience it delivers to employees is huge."

Realizing Tangible Results

But the business value did not end there. NYC Health + Hospitals quickly saw the benefits of using Kiteworks for more than emailing PHI efficiently and securely to external partners. The organization began to leverage Kiteworks' Enterprise Content Management (ECM) connectors. These connectors enable physicians to pull any file from their preferred ECM system, such as Dropbox and Box. With Kiteworks, users have a single view into these content repositories and can easily and securely search, access, edit, share, and manage files without having to duplicate them—maintaining a single source of truth for the document.

With more efficient workflows and a more productive medical staff, it is not a stretch to say Kiteworks has improved collaboration needs at NYC Health + Hospitals. "With one solution, we enhanced internal and external collaboration and improved business communications and agility for our employees," Bhaduri concludes. "Our senior leaders are thrilled that Kiteworks was embraced so quickly."

Needs

- Deliver efficient and secure sharing of PHI and other data

- Integrate with existing file sharing and DLP solutions

Kiteworks Solutions

- Kiteworks Secure Email for exchanging PHI and other sensitive data with third parties leveraging a Microsoft Outlook plugin, a platform that users are already comfortable using

- Kiteworks Secure File Transfer for connecting to ECM systems like Box and Dropbox, enabling staff to collaborate efficiently while maintaining the highest levels of security and governance

Business Impact

- Rapid adoption due to intuitive Outlook plugin

- PHI safeguarded via secure file sharing for medical records shared externally

- Increased employee productivity from a single view into preferred ECM systems

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